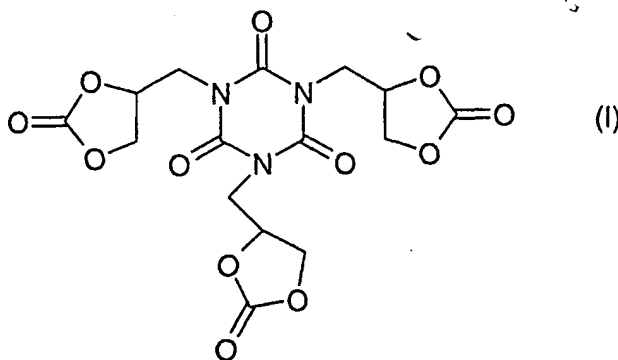


What is claimed is

1. A crosslinking agent for heat-curable carboxyl-containing polymers, in particular for systems containing carboxyl-terminated polyesters, carboxyl-containing acrylate polymers and/or methacrylate polymers, which crosslinking agent consists at least of one cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compound, which is characterised in that said cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compound contains at least one catalyst in dissolved or dispersed form, which has been incorporated separately into the isocyanurate compound prior to the crosslinking reaction.
2. A crosslinking agent according to claim 1, wherein the cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compound has a melting point of at least 120°C, preferably of at least 130°C and, particularly preferably, of at least 140°C.
3. A crosslinking agent according to claim 1, wherein the cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compound is a tris(2-oxo-1,3-dioxolanyl-4-methyl)isocyanurate of formula (I):



4. A crosslinking agent according to claim 1, wherein the cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compound is a compound analogous to the compound of formula (I) and contains only one single or two cyclocarbonate group(s), the remaining groups being in the form of glycidyl radicals, which analogous compound preferably contains not more than 35 mol-%, particularly preferably not more than 5 mol-% of epoxy groups.

5. A crosslinking agent according to claim 1, which comprises the catalyst in an amount from 0.01 % by weight to 20 % by weight, preferably from 0.1 % by weight to 10 % by weight, more preferably from 5 % by weight, based on the weight of the cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compound.
6. A crosslinking agent according to claim 1, which comprises a catalyst which acts selectively predominantly or exclusively on the cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compound.
7. A crosslinking agent according to claim 1, wherein the catalyst which accelerates the crosslinking reaction of the cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compounds with the carboxyl-containing polymers is a compound acting as a Lewis acid or as a Lewis base, FeSO_4 , NaHSO_4 , CeSO_4 , H_3PO_4 , ZnCl_2 , Na_2CO_3 , phosphonic acid, p-toluenesulfonic acid, dimethylsulfonic acid, an ammonium salt and/or a phosphonium salt.
8. A crosslinking agent according to claim 1, wherein the catalyst which accelerates the crosslinking reaction of the cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compounds with the carboxyl-containing polymer is a tetraalkyl ammonium halide, an aryl- and alkyl-substituted ammonium halide and/or a phosphonium salt, preferably a phosphonium halide and, most preferably, an ethyltriphenylphosphonium bromide.
9. A process for the preparation of a crosslinking agent according to claim 1, which comprises dissolving a cyclocarbonate group-containing isocyanurate compound in a suitable solvent, dissolving or dispersing therein at least one catalyst and then removing the solvent again.
10. The crosslinking agent prepared or obtainable according to claim 9.
11. Use of the crosslinking agent according to any one of claims 1-8 and 10 as hardener for heat-curable carboxyl-containing polymers, in particular as hardener in systems containing carboxyl-terminated polyesters, carboxyl-containing acrylate and/or methacrylate polymers, preferably in corresponding heat-curable paint systems, in particular powder coating compositions.